

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4778

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, US, UR, JA, FR

SUBJECT: VICTOR LOUIS ON THE "AFFAIR OF THE MIG-25"

1. IN SHORT, MOSCOW DATELINED FRANCE SOIR PIECE OF SEPTEMBER 9, VICTOR LOUIS THREATENS THAT AFFAIR OF MIG-25 WHICH LANDED IN JAPAN RUNS RISK OF CREATING "SERIOUS PROBLEMS" BETWEEN TOKYO AND MOSCOW IF JAPAN PERMITS AMERICAN EXPERTS TO INSPECT PLANE AND INTERROGATE PILOT.

2. LOUIS SAYS THAT INCIDENT WAS GREETED IN MOSCOW WITH "CERTAIN MOROSENESS." SOVS HAVE NO JAPANESE REPLY SO FAR TO THEIR REQUESTS FOR RETURN OF PLANE AND PILOT.

3. IN CASE OF "FORCED LANDINGS," ARTICLE CONTINUES,
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SOVIET PILOTS ARE INSTRUCTED TO EJECT AND ASSURE THAT

PLANE IS COMPLETELY DEMOLISHED. ALTERNATIVELY THEY SHOULD DESTROY ALL SECRET EQUIPMENT IN THE PLANE. THIS, LOUIS SAYS, IS WHY LT. BELENKO'S REQUEST FOR ASYLUM HAS PRODUCED "CERTAIN ANXIETY" IN MOSCOW.

4. FINAL PARA INTERESTINGLY EVOKES (WHAT AT LEAST TO US IS) NEW SOVIET INTERNATIONAL PRINCIPLE. "THE USAGE", LOUIS SAYS, "WHEN SOVIET MATERIAL FALLS INTO THE HANDS OF ANOTHER COUNTRY IS THAT THAT COUNTRY ABSTAIN FROM PASSING IT ON TO AMERICAN EXPERTS." THIS HAS BEEN THE PRACTICE WITH ISRAEL (SIC), WHICH HAS HAD EXTENSIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO PUT ITS HANDS ON THE MOST SOPHISTICATED SOVIET MILITARY GADGETS. "IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN", LOUIS CONCLUDES, "IF JAPAN WILL ACCEPT THIS TACITLY ACCEPTED RULE."

5. COMMENT: VICTOR LOUIS' SELF-CONSCIOUS AND TARDY CONTRIBUTION REFLECTS MOSCOW'S EVIDENT EMBARRASSMENT OVER THIS AFFAIR AND ITS SPECIAL CONCERNS OVER U.S. EXPLOITATION OF THE PLANE. HIS ASSERTION OF "TACITLY ACCEPTED PRINCIPLE" THAT, IN SUCH CASES, SOVS EXPECT THIRD COUNTRIES TO PROTECT THEIR EQUIPMENT FROM U.S. INSPECTION, IS AN INTRIGUING COROLLARY WHICH MAY BEAR CAREFUL WATCHING IN THE FUTURE. FOR PRESENT, LOUIS' KGB SUPERIORS EVIDENTLY FELT THAT THE POSSIBLE MARGINAL IMPACT OF PUBLISHING AN INFORMAL LOUIS THREAT IN EUROPE FOR JAPANESE CONSUMPTION, OUTWEIGHED, EVEN AT THIS ADVANCED STAGE OF THIS AFFAIR, THE ADVANTAGES OF MAINTAINING SILENCE.
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